in a patient suffering from myxœdema the thyroid gland has lost the power of supplying its normal secretion to the blood, and that by this method of treatment we make good this loss by keeping up a continuous supply of the secretion from one of the lower animals. We have no evidence to show that the patient's thyroid gland regains any of its secretory activity, for in no case, as far as I am aware, have the symptoms failed to reappear when the treatment has been entirely suspended for three or four months. I have found, however, that when, as in Dr. Elam's case, the patient has passed through the first stage of the treatment and the symptoms have practically disappeared it is advisable to diminish the dose to the smallest quantity which will maintain the improved condition. As a rule a daily dose of from three to ten minims of the extract is all that is required to do this. Pains are not uncommon during the first stage of the treatment and they would probably disappear in this case if the dose was diminished. In two of my cases there has been a discharge from the mouth at night but it has disappeared under the thyroid treatment.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

GEORGE R. MURRAY, M.B. Camb.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, Sept. 12th, 1893.

DEATH REGISTRATION.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reference to the registration of stillbirths, I wish to draw attention to the futility of the committee's recommendation if all cases reported as such and not certified by medical men are not examined by a qualified man with a view to verifying that the child was under seven months and born dead. I trust it will not be competent for registrars to accept the statements of midwives or women present at the birth on these points.—I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

St. Helens, Lancs., Sept. 12th, 1893. E. J. GILLERAN.

AMERICAN MEDICAL SCHOOLS.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS, — In the article in the Students' Number of THE LANCET on the above subject I have failed to find any mention even made of the greatest university on the American continent, viz., Michigan University, situated at Ann Arbor, Michigan, which had 2788 students, last year's representing 44 States and territories, including 24 students from Massachusetts and 6 from Connecticut, the homes of the Harvard and Yale Universities respectively. There were 8 students from Japan, 34 from Canada, 5 from England, 4 from Germany, besides representatives from China, the Bermudas, Bulgaria, Scotland, Mexico and other foreign countries. There were 344 medical students, besides 63 in the homœopathic school, unfortunately a department of the University. The dental school had 189 students. This latter is acknowleged to be the model dental school of America. The course in the medical schools extends over four years of nine months each. They had here the first established and best equipped bacteriological laboratory in the New World. The chemical laboratory is probably the most extensive in existence. Though the clinical facilities are not what might be found in large cities, still they are sufficient. The hospital accommodates about 150 patients. I found no mention either of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, where a graduate of even the London University might pick up something.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

Sept. 12th, 1893. AMERICAN M.D.

*** The article upon American Medical Education did not claim to deal with every medical school in America. It was distinctly stated that only a few schools were mentioned, but that those few possessed the right to be considered typical of the others. Under these circumstances the omission of an account of Michigan and Johns Hopkins Universities cannot be construed as a slight upon either admirable institution.—ED. L.

DRS. SYMINGTON of Brampton and Richard Brown of Blaydon have been recipients of testimonials from their ambulance pupils.

THE SANITARY CONDITION OF BOMBAY DURING THE RECENT RIOTS.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

THE condition of an Oriental city during a period of war or of civil commotion can never be properly described without reference to its sanitary state and the effect of the events on its conservancy arrangements. The statement in the history of a siege that after a time sickness or plague broke out conveys little to the mind of the ordinary reader, who does not know from experience in the East how quickly decomposing refuse will pollute the air. Shortness of provisions, accompanied by hard labour and anxiety, will bring about sickness if sufficiently prolonged, but in an Eastern city where conservancy work has been more or less interrupted or even stopped for a short time filth diseases will promptly make their appearance, and once fairly started their progress is one of terrible rapidity.

In India the work connected with the removal of sewage is performed by men and women belonging to some of the lowest castes, and known as a class by the name of Halalcores. Amongst Hindus this work is hereditary, whilst in Mohamedan communities it is done by the lowest class of labourers, who are not bound by any tie to the work. As a class, Halalcores are remarkably healthy and vigorous, and are a striking illustration of how men in the course of generations may be bred to resist influences that are generally considered of the most insanitary nature. What the weeding-out process has cost will never be known, as it dates back beyond the period of vital statistics. The prejudices of all other classes regarding conservancy work in general, and regarding the removal of nightsoil in particular, are so strong that natives of India will endure extremes of air pollution rather than take any active measures to help themselves.

Sewers, to any considerable extent, only exist in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, but they do not correspond with the English type of sewer, as they are not, as a rule, connected directly with the houses. Most of the houses discharge their sullage and much of their sewage into open gutters, or "gullies" as they are called, lying between the houses. These gullies are frequently not more than eighteen inches wide, and although they are swept out daily it is impossible to keep them clean. In Bombay, owing to the absence of control during the building of the older parts of the town, the houses are crowded together in a manner unknown elsewhere. A house may have a frontage of from twenty to thirty feet, a depth of from eighty to a hundred feet and a height of four or more stories. The greater number of the windows are on the sides and they are frequently above a gully not more than three feet wide ; and into this gully is thrown every kind of refuse from kitchens and from living and sleeping rooms. These rooms receive all their light and air through the gully and the people who live and multiply in them exist through a process of natural selection that has gone on for centuries. A very large part of Bombay is built in the manner described and shelters a population whose density will be best appreciated by means of comparison with that of other large cities. The extreme density of the population of London is 222 persons per acre, that of Calcutta being 208 and Bombay 760. In houses per acre London has a maximum of 22, whilst Bombay possesses 35. Generally speaking the greatest density of population in London is less than any one out of twelve sections of Bombay, which average 458·57 persons per acre. In such neighbourhoods the wind rarely penetrates. the mean temperature is 30° F. higher than in England, and whilst in London the average moisture in the air amounts to 0 51 lb. per 1000 cubic feet, that of Bombay averages 1·135 lb. In consequence of these conditions the rapidity of decomposition of organic matter is extremely rapid in Bombay, and any waste matter, animal or vegetable, that lies about for even twenty-four hours becomes a serious nuisance. Hence it is necessary that the cleansing of the town should be regular and more frequent than in Europe.

Sanitary works were originally introduced in Bombay on European models and the authorities of to-day are a good deal hampered with arrangements which do not suit their purpose, but which cannot be at once discarded. Amongst these the most notable are the small branch drains leading to houses, which are a continual source of trouble on account of